THE PRESENT STATE OF THE STAGE IN *Great-Britain* and *Ireland.* AND THE THEATRICAL CHARACTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS, In both Kingdoms,

IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

——Si vis me flere, dolendum eſt
Primum ipſi tibi, tunc tua me infortunia lædent,
Telephe, vel Peleu! Malè ſi mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo.

Hor. de Art. Poet.

LONDON:

Printed for PAUL VAILLANT, oppoſite *Southampton-Street*, in the *Strand*; and M. COOPER, at the *Globe*, in *Pater-Noſter-Row*.

MDCCLIII.

[Price One Shilling.]

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE STAGE IN *Great-Britain* and *Ireland.*

IN vain does the Enthuſiaſt rail at Dramatic Entertainments; he only proclaims himſelf the Child of Folly, the Slave of Ignorance, while their Encouragement is promoted by every Lover of Virtue, every Admirer of the Arts.

A Retroſpect of the *Engliſh* Hiſtory will inform us, that thoſe Malcontents, whoſe Diviſions overturned the Conſtitution of Church and State, and who ſtained their Hands with the Blood of their So-

vereign, began their Diſcontent with Invectives againſt the Stage, which at laſt produced its Suppreſſion. Each Individual, concerned in the Anarchy, concealed the Ambition of his miſguided Soul, under the fair and alluring Maſk of Religion and Reformation. They dreaded the Weapon which had been ſo often and ſo ſucceſsfully employed againſt the Enſlavers and Deſtroyers of Mankind; they knew they were Tyrants in their Principles; and were apprehenſive that an EUPOLIS or an ARISTOPHANES would ſtart up, pluck off the Diſguiſe, and expoſe their Hypocriſy to their infatuated Adherents.

He who writes for the Theatre is the Champion of Virtue, againſt the Hydra-headed Monſter Vice; to deviate from this laudable Point, is to be unworthy of the Muſe's Protection, to proſtitute the Purpoſes of its Inſtitution.

CICERO calls the Stage *the Picture of Life, the Mirror of Manners.* The various Viciſſitudes which are there expreſs'd by intereſting Incidents, were calculated originally to imprint and cheriſh the ſocial Virtues amongſt Men; to explode falſe Heroiſm; to bridle the unruly Paſſions, by demonſtrating their evil Tendency; and to expel Vice and Folly from the World, by puniſhing the one and ridiculing the other.

The

The following Lines which I have met in ſome old Author, whoſe Name has eſcaped my Memory, will not, I fancy be improper in this Place. MELPOMENE is ſuppos'd ſpeaking, and repreſents not badly the Deſign of Tragedy.

——————————I am MELPOMENE,
That held in awe the *Tyrants* of the World,
And play'd their Lives in public Theatres,
Making them *fear* to *ſin*, ſince fearleſs I
Prepare to write their Lives in crimſon Ink,
And act their Shames in Eye of all the World.
Have I not whip'd *Vice* with a *Scourge* of *Steel*,
Unmaſk'd *ſtern Murther*, ſham'd *laſcivious Luſt*,
Pluck'd of the Vizor from *grim Treaſon*'s Face:
With a potential Hand tam'd Fury's Rage,
And kill'd *black Envy* with her own keen Dart?

I have ſhewn *Pride* his Picture on the Stage,
Reveal'd the ugly Shapes his *Colouring hides*.
And made him paſs thence meekly.

Here let Oppreſſion view, and tremble at the Fate of a (1) *Bajazet*; let Pride and Injuſtice fear the Fall of a (2) *Wolſey*; the unexpected Return of Dominion to the Hands of hoary (3) *Lear*, even when the Weapon of the Aſſaſſin is raiſed for his Deſtruction, muſt baniſh Deſpair from the Wretch's Breaſt, who has ſeen it and reflects; Diſobedience ſhall ſhudder at the Ruin of a (4) *Belvidera*; (5) *Caliſta*'s mournful Ending reſtrain the Torrent of ungovernable Paſſion; and the Harlot tremble at the Misfortunes of a *Shore*.

Tragedy ſhould deter from Vice, by beſtowing its juſt Puniſhment, and excite to Virtue by rewarding noble Deeds; it ſhould have that Effect upon Guilt, which *Hamlet* thus finely expreſſes.

I have heard that guilty Creatures at a Play,
Have by the very Cunning of the Scene,
Been ſtruck ſo to the Soul, that preſently
They have proclaim'd their Malefactions.

Comedy ſtoops to humbler Game, and laſhes the Impertinence of Faſhion, the Folly of Party, or Affectation of Excellence; as *the Perſians*, to deride Drunken-

(1 Rowe's *Tamerlane*. (2) *Henry the Eighth*. (3) *Lear*, alter'd by *Tate*. (4) *Venice preſerv'd*, by *Otway*. (5) Rowe's *Fair Penitent*.

neſs

neſs, expos'd to public View an intoxicated Slave. *True Comedy* will make the real (6) *Kitely* bluſh at his Jealouſy; *Foppington* at his Follies; and *the* (7) *Modern fine Gentleman* at his Picture in LETHE; tells (8) *Brute* that he deſerves Horns; and (9) *Noll Bluff* that he's a Coward. Let theſe few, out of innumerable Examples, convince its Enemies, that the Stage is the *School* of *Inſtruction*.

If we are to judge of the Antients, from ſuch of their Works as have eſcaped down to us, thro' the Devaſtations of Time, they give Place to none, for Genius, Abilities, and Execution; And they always encouraged Theatrical Merit.

Ariſtotle informs us, that *Theoderites* was the beſt Tragedian in the World; that for his Performance of the Part of *Achilles Alexander the Great* gave him a Penſion of *five thouſand Drachmas*. It was this Exhibition firſt filled him with a Deſire of Glory, and gave him to pant after Martial Exploits. Does not CICERO boaſt of his Intimacy with ÆSOPUS and ROSCIUS, the

(6) *Every Man in his Humour*, by *Ben Johnſon*. (7) A Character admirably drawn in a Farce called *Lethe*, written by Mr. *Garrick*, and, indiſputably, the beſt *Petit Piece now on the Stage*. (8) Vanbrugh's *Provok'd Wife*. (9) Congreve's *Old Batchelor*.

two principal Actors of his Time? Who is there ignorant of his eloquent Defence of the latter?

CATO makes it a Queſtion, Whether ROSCIUS had not more Merit in the ſingle Capacity of an Actor, than CICERO in his two-fold Excellencies of Author and Orator: And the *Roman* Hiſtory informs us, that this *great Actor* was in ſuch high Eſteem with the State, as to receive daily out of the public Exchequer, for his Subſiſtence, as much Money as amounts to *Sixteen Pounds Engliſh.*

Thoſe who moſt obſtinately perſiſt in condemning the Stage, cannot deny, that while the divided Republics of *Greece*, and that of *Rome* flouriſhed, it was tolerated, nay encouraged, at the moſt immenſe Expence by the then firſt Men in the World; and we cannot ſuppoſe they would have thus approved Entertainments, of whoſe Efficacy upon the Minds and Morals of the People, they were not well aſſured.

Tho' the *Roman* Laws did not ſeem the moſt favourable to *theatrical Performers*, yet I cannot find it any where proved, that they ſubjected them to Infamy, purely for their Occupation: No! it was the Actor's Want of Conduct, not the Profeſſion, which was condemned.

While

While *Greece* was the politeſt Part of the World, and ſtigmatized all other Nations with the Name of Barbarous, it cheriſhed the *Dramatic Muſes* with a Parent's Care. The *Athenians* were obliged to make a Law, preventing the Judges of the *Areopagus*, from writing Plays; and why? Not through a Contempt for the Stage, but becauſe it gave the Enemies of the Government Room to accuſe them of attending more to the Care of public Diverſions, than that of adminiſtering Juſtice to the People. Long before this Ordinance, as well as after it, there was a Fund appropriated by the Public to the Support of the *Theatre:* The Stipends of which were held ſo ſacred, that when ATHENS trembled for the threatened Invaſion of *Philip* of *Macedon*, tho' the State wanted Money to repel his Attacks, it was decreed, that this Sum ſhould remain untouched; while the Treaſures conſecrated to the Service of the Gods, were held in leſs Veneneration: The Conqueror was more feared as a Foe to their Improvement, than as an Enemy to their Liberty.

The *Drama* has been the favourite Diverſion of every Prince whoſe Boſom was animated with true Patriotiſm, and a Love for Learning: Theſe are the Men it boaſts for its Protectors, and they will, I am afraid,

afraid, outballance any Characters that can be ſet in the Oppoſition.

Our renowned Queen *Elizabeth* always honoured the Stage with her royal Indulgence; ſhe ornamented it, as we have been informed, with the Tranſlation of a Tragedy of *Euripides*; and *Shakeſpear* wrote ſome of his Plays at her particular Command: Nay, ſhe has often condeſcended to appear in a Dramatic Character among her Ladies of Honour, as have moſt of the Princes, who, ſince her Time, adorned the *Britiſh* Throne.

It was one of King *Charles* the *Second's* principal Delights, and the preſent Royal Family have many Times made it theirs. The *French* King, and moſt of the Princes in *Europe*, have done the ſame.

As ſome of the greateſt People who ever ornamented the World, have ſtooped to *trudge* in the *Sock*, or *ſtrut* in the *Buſkin*, I ſee no Reaſon why the Name of *Actor* ſhould not be mentioned with a little more Reſpect than ſome wrong-headed People are willing to ſhew it; however, I have generally obſerved thoſe who ſpeak with Contempt of this Claſs of People, to be either Perſons whoſe Ideas from a mean Education, or the Defect of halting Nature, are confined and groveling; or who judge at random, without having properly

weighed

weighed the Sentence they pronounce, or indeed underſtood the Subject.

Knowledge has been in general improved with the Encouragement of the Stage. Before *Theſpis* introduced the *Drama* in GREECE, moral Philoſophy was moſtly unknown, and Science in a very Infant State: The Stage began to flouriſh with *Æſchylus*, *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*; then roſe thoſe Wonders of Learning, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, *Ariſtotle*, *Thucydides*, *Ariſtophanes*, *Demoſthenes*, and *Æſchines*; and we all know that the firſt and greateſt Moral Philoſopher the World ever beheld, *Socrates*, was ſeen frequently at the public Theatre.

Livius Andronicus was the firſt who introduced the Drama among the *Romans*; after him came *Plautus*, *Terence*, *Cicero*, *Virgil*, *Ovid*, *Horace*, &c. &c.

What a Number of excellent Authors has *France* ſeen in Conſequence of *Corneille*'s reforming her Stage? And have not *Milton*, *Dryden*, *Pope*, *Newton*, and *Boyle* been the Succeſſors of SHAKESPEAR, with whom ours grew into Form? How few are the Authors of Merit, in any Species of Writing, either poetical or philoſophical, we can trace before his Time? what Numbers we can boaſt ſince?

No Diverſion ever was deviſed which is ſo truly calculated to inſtruct while it en-

tertains; and it is no Argument againſt the Stage, to affirm that the Morals of ſome have been tainted by it. The evil and perverſe Inclination will extract Malignity from *Clark* or *Tillotſon*; and the Deiſt will miſinterpret the ſpiritual Text, to ſupport his Blaſphemies.

Muſt I avoid the Church, becauſe there the Man of Intrigue firſt became acquainted with her, whoſe Innocence he has ſacrificed to his Paſſions? Bid me not drink, becauſe *Alexander the Great* was poiſoned; nor ſuffer in my Houſe any Fire, becauſe *London* was burned: Intreat me to avoid ſerving my Country in the Field, becauſe there fell *Sweden's Twelfth Charles*; or remember the Fate of a *Balchen* and a *Shovel*, and leave the foaming Deep to the Prow of the Imprudent. The Reaſons in Defence of any one of theſe Remonſtrances are of the ſame Force with thoſe againſt the Theatre.

'Tis certain that the Licentiouſneſs of too many Actors has juſtly ſubjected them to the Reproach and Contempt which we ſee daily flung upon that Name; however, the good Conduct and decent Demeanor of them for many Years paſt ſhould be ſufficient to remove the Scandal; nor ſhould the whole Body be condemned, becauſe a few may be found inconvertible, ſince by the ſame Rule we may freely abuſe the State,

State, the Clergy, the Army, and every Society of People, until one offers itſelf to View, which has never been diſgrac'd by a Member. This, I believe, is not in being.

It is a vulgar Opinion, that the Denomination of a *Vagabond* is, by *Law*, awarded to a *Player*; this is founded on an *Act* of *Parliament*, paſs'd in the Reign of *James* the *Firſt*, which after having aſſigned proper Puniſhments to, and rank'd among the loweſt of People, *Mountebanks*, *Strollers*, *Players of Interludes*, &c. expreſly excepts ſuch Perſons, as exhibit under the Sanction of the *Royal Patent*, and are called his *Majeſty's Servants*. Theſe are the Actors whom we ſhall conſider in this Review, whoſe Cauſe we endeavour to defend: there are ſo few beyond this Bound, who poſſeſs any Merit, that we muſt pronounce them unworthy of the Name of Actors; tho' we ſometimes indeed, but ſeldom, behold Objections. If we examine that common Objection againſt the Profeſſion of a Player, that of its being mercenary, I am induced to believe, that inſtead of depreciating, we ſhall advance that deſpis'd Character, to an equal Footing with many, who imagine themſelves ſuperior to it. Shew me any Sett of People who have not Profit for their Pilot. Does the *Lawyer* ſtrain his Lungs at the Bar for Hours, without this View? or is it the Bleſſing

pronounced on the Viſitor of the Sick, which leads the *Phyſician* to the Apartment of the Diſeaſed? The very Doctor will tell you, No! and confeſs his Motive to be Gain.

Readers, if you have watched the Steps of *Modern Patriots*, I fancy you will find that pompous Phraſe, *our Country's Love*, ſink into a Phantom, an unſubſtantial Shade, at the Touch of the Magical Taliſman, *Gold*; here then does not this boaſted, this ſhining Character, tho'

Adorn'd with Titles, and hung round with Strings POPE.

ſink beneath that of the Player?

I will not ſay that dear Subſiſtance leads the *Military Hero* to the *tented Field*; nor will I accuſe the Clergy of encouraging this predominant Paſſion; they are both Orders too virtuous to deſerve the Rod of Cenſure. I ſhall only remark, that I fear a few Members of each may be as much Actors in their Way as the moſt arrant Player.

But from general let us deſcend to particular Heads: enough has been ſaid already in Defence of the Antiquity, Honour, and Neceſſity (to every well regulated Government) of the Stage. We will now return to our firſt Deſign, and con-

confine ourſelves to the *Britiſh Stage*, and its preſent State.

I own the Taſk is difficult, nay dangerous. There is no Science in which we find ſo many Pretenders and Critics as in that of Poetry; and in no Species of it are they ſo plenty as in the Dramatic. This has brought the Name of Critic into Contempt; nor do I expect to paſs uncenſur'd, but I have made the Caſt,—*Jacta eſt*—— *and I muſt ſtand the Hazard of the Die.*

The Theatre is a *Microcoſm*, where Kings are made and unmade; Lovers ſigh and die, Ghoſts riſe and ſink, *Harlequin* jumps, dances, runs, tumbles, and conjures to the Amazement of the Galleries, and of all who are not in the Secret of his Machinations.

Managers, as the Mainſprings of all theſe Wonders, the arbitrary Lords of thoſe enchanted Worlds, claim our firſt Attention. There are many Perfections requiſite in a good Manager: He ſhould have a ſtrong Judgment to enable him to diſtinguiſh Merit from Pretenſion; Propriety in Taſte, and Elegance in Decoration; a Spirit to encourage Merit, and to ſcruple no Expence in ornamenting his Exhibitions, and pleaſing his Audience; Impartiality to diſpoſe his Performers in their proper Spheres; and Reſolution to adhere

to

to the Rules of his Government, without any particular Indulgence; to puniſh the Neglectful, reward the Induſtrious, and reject the impertinent Supplication of thoſe, whoſe Vanity would lead them to a Caſt of Parts, for which Nature has never formed them.

There is a certain Sett of People, with whom, Managers find it difficult to deal, as indeed it is impoſſible to pleaſe every body; theſe are Authors, who are generally very tenacious of their own Merit, and the great Misfortune is, that he who has little, thinks he has a great deal, and he who has none, thinks he has moſt. So that the leaſt Repulſe offends; however we muſt make ſome Allowance for him, who complains at being rejected, when he relied on his Piece for pecuniary Aſſiſtance. For here he is wounded as well in Pocket as in Fame.

I have often heard it ſaid, that it is not unuſual with Managers to reject many Plays, as unfit for the Stage, and to condemn them, without having once looked into them; this brings to my Mind a drole Story, which, while it entertains, will not, I hope, be thought an untimely Introduction, as it is a Fact to which I was in part Witneſs.

An

An Acquaintance of mine ſubmitted a Piece to the Examination of a Manager,—no Matter for his Name,—who promis'd to be faithful in his Review, adding very juſtly, *the Town is in want of new Pieces, and I ſhall have much Pleaſure, if I find that yours can afford them proper Entertainment.*

A Time was appointed for the Determination of this weighty Affair, and half-a-dozen of the Author's beſt Bows concluded the preſent Conference.

At length the great deciſive Period came, when away poſts *Sir Bard* on the Wings of Expectation; he was introduced to the Preſence, and received his Piece from the Hands of the Manager, with the mortifying Sentence of, *It won't do* (pronounced with ſome ſeeming Concern). AUTH. Sir! *(in a vaſt Flurry)* MANA. It won't do, Sir, I wiſh it would. I am vaſtly ſorry. AUTH. Perhaps you have not had Time to peruſe it, if not, I'll wait on you a Week hence, and leave my Piece till then. MANA. By no Means, Sir, it may be miſlaid among the Number of Things of the ſame Sort, which are daily poured in upon me; beſides, Sir, I am vaſtly hurry'd, vaſtly hurry'd indeed, but I have read your Piece with great Care, *Scene* by *Scene*, *Line* by *Line*; there are many fine Things in it,

but

but it won't do.—The Town, Sir, is mighty nice; beſides, Sir, I have ſo much Buſineſs—Sir your humble Servant, you've a Genius, Sir, and may do better another Time,—you may always command me,—your moſt obedient Servant, &c. &c. &c.

Immediately after Chance threw me in the Way of this deſponding irritated Author, who ſtopped me to unburthen his afflicted Heart; he grew warm in the Relation, and ſwore the Manager a Blockhead, affirming many Speeches in his Play equal to any in *Shakeſpear*; ſo ſaying, he plucks the darling Copy from his Breaſt, to read to me a favourite Paſſage, when lo! to our vaſt Surprize, the Leaves of the Book, which had been folded in the Manner of Print Sheets, appeared uncut, conſequently had not been peruſed. This Sight turned his Anger into Mirth, and he fairly own'd he had laid this Trap to catch the Manager, whoſe ſeemingly pathetic Concern for the Piece's Inſufficiency, and apparent Inclination to be ſerviceable, had blotted it entirely from his Remembrance.

Such Accidents as theſe often ſtamp the Character of *Injudicious* on a Manager, when perhaps a fair Examination would determine this Inattention, rather as a Mark of his Judgment. When a Piece of real Merit is rejected, and I fancy 'tis ſeldom offered,

offer'd, 'tis a Manager's Negligence, and not his Judgment, which I would arraign.

Leſt this Story ſhould be interpreted into perſonal Experience, I think it neceſſary to add, I never preſented a Piece to any Manager but Mr. GARRICK, and then it was not a Performance of my own, but of a Friend, for whom I have the higheſt Eſteem, and who will be one Day a ſhining Ornament to the Republic of Letters. In Mr. GARRICK's Reception of me, he ſhew'd all the Politeneſs of a Gentleman, and the Sincerity of a Friend; he pointed out its Defects, and illuſtrated its Beauties with the Judgment of an impartial Critic, and an Accuracy that ſhew'd him a careful Examiner, and a faithful Guardian of the important Truſt to which his unexampled Merit has rais'd him.

From the Stage, from Managers, and from Authors, let us proceed to a formal Review of the ſeveral Performers, in each of his Majeſty's Company of Comedians. Thoſe of *Drury-Lane* Theatre, ſometimes called the Old Houſe, claim our firſt Attention; having the Right of Elderſhip to plead in Support of their Precedence.

At the Head of theſe we find Mr *Garrick*, the firſt Actor in Merit of the preſent Age, or perhaps of any preceding one, who ſtands among Actors as *Shakeſpear*

among Dramatic Authors, the firſt, alone, and unrival'd.

Nothing can be added by me, in his Praiſe worthy the Subject; his Merit is above Panegyric, and conſpicuous to the dulleſt Underſtanding. I never ſaw him in Diſtreſs, but I wept; in Rapture, but I participated; in Rage, but I was enflamed in Fear, but I was *appalled*; in Agony, but I pity'd; or in Humour, but I laughed; to his Excellence my actuated Paſſions have always paid the Tribute of Sympathy. In this Place 'tis proper to obviate an Objection made againſt him by ſome ſuperficial Critics, of ſtopping falſly; which from the moſt minute Obſervation I find to be groundleſs: 'Tis true, that ſometimes he pauſes in Places, where, critically ſpeaking, there is no Pauſe, in order to collect his Breath, to give additional Force to what enſues; but his Tone of Voice ſhews plainly the Connection uninterrupted. This Method, which appears a Beauty in him, is pernicious to his injudicious Imitators; of whom there are many: I do not chuſe to particularize, or I could point out one, *whom I have ſeen play, and heard others praiſe, and that highly too*, who, with this only Imitation, moſt aukwardly adopted, was called a Copy of *Garrick*, by thoſe who did not, or perhaps could not, conſider

ſider better, altho' he was emphatically wrong in almoſt every Thing he repeated. I am ſure I never heard him ſpeak, or ſaw him act, but he reminded me of *Nature's Journeymen having made Men, and not made them well neither*, he *imitated* HUMANITY *ſo abominably*; however, this Seaſon I have been happy enough to miſs, from the *London Stage*, this inconſiſtent Player, whoſe Vanity annually entertained us with a *Lear* or a *Hamlet* for his own Benefit.—But this is deviating from my firſt Deſign, wherefore I ſhall return to Mr. GARRICK, and conclude this Character, with obſerving, that were it poſſible to fill the Houſe with *Puritans*, the *Drama*'s profeſs'd Enemies, they would involuntary weep at his *Lear*, and laugh at his *Abel Drugger*.

Now, Reader, receive at my Hands, that female Ornament of the Stage, whoſe unblemiſhed Character alone were ſufficient to recommend her to public Approbation, excluſive of her extenſive Merit as an Actreſs. The Propriety of her Enunciation is particularly remarkable; the Grace and Energy with which ſhe ſpeaks, convey a moſt perfect Idea of the Senſe of the Author. Thoſe who are converſant with the Theatre muſt know I mean Mrs. PRITCHARD; and tho' her Size ſeems not well ſuited to ſome Characters, 'tis impoſſible to hear her ſpeak, and not forget the

Diſadvantage: even while I would adviſe her to quit *Indiana*, in the *Conſcious Lovers*, *Clarinda*, in the *Suſpicious Huſband*, and Characters in that Caſt, I muſt confeſs I never ſee her in any one without infinite Pleaſure.

After ſome Writers who ſeem to have ſpoken more rapturouſly of Miſs BELLAMY as a Woman, than as an Actreſs, a diſintereſted Critic muſt make but a poor Figure; however, I ſhall venture to ſay, that as a young Performer ſhe has acquitted herſelf extremely well in many Parts, particularly in *Juliet*, when it was revived at the old Houſe: In ſome indeed ſhe has appeared quite beyond her Powers; and I ſhould be glad, for her own ſake, to ſee her decline thoſe Characters in which Rage prevails; a leſs pompous Pronounciation would certainly be of Service to her, ſince thoſe regular, thoſe periodical Cadences and Elevations of Voice, which ſhe is too often found to play upon, ſhews the Perſons who uſe them not to feel truly what they utter. 'Tis not by theſe that the Dignity of Tragedy is ſupported; no! it is rather turned to Ridicule; I would not indeed adviſe the reducing Tragedy entirely to common Diſcourſe; that is another Extreme, and the Medium is moſt commendable. I ſhould not have preſumed thus far to adviſe, but

that I am informed the Lady under Conſideration is very diffident of her own Abilities; heeds Inſtruction, and is thankful for it, a plain Proof of her good Underſtanding, from which conſiderable Improvements may be expected.

Mr. WOODWARD ſeems deſervedly to be a Favourite of the Town; he always gives me great Pleaſure, and if the frequent loud and general Laughs of the Audience are the Teſt of a good Comedian, no one gives more numerous Proofs of a Right to that Character; his *Captain Bobadil* (1), is certainly very great acting; 'tis what the *French* call *Jeu de Fin*; and for which we have no *Engliſh* Word ſufficiently expreſſive. We muſt allow him a good deal of Merit in *Lethe*. I would recommend to him the diſtinguiſhing between the different kind of Fops in which he often appears, and I am certain a little Conſideration will ſhew him that the *Lord Foppington*, of the *Careleſs Huſband*, differs vaſtly from that in the *Relapſe* or *Virtue in Danger*, and *Witwou'd* in *The Way of the World* is not the ſame with the *Clody* of the *Fop's Fortune*.

(1) This is a Character of *Every Man in his Humour*, written by *Ben Johnſon*; but its vaſt Succeſs muſt be principally attributed to the elegant Strokes of Comedy, wherewith the Corrections of Mr. *Garrick* have imbelliſhed it.

It is neceſſary here to remark, that we have enjoyed vaſt Pleaſure from Mr. WOODWARD, in a ſort of *Theatrical* Entertainment, not yet mentioned, which requires more Exertion of Heels than of Head, according to ſome Critics, but which, in my Opinion, requires a good deal of the latter to lead to the proper Uſe of the former. Every body muſt gueſs me to point at Pantomime; tho' perhaps it is not univerſally known, that to Mr. WOODWARD's Invention we owe *Queen Mab*, the *Genii* and *Harlequin Ranger*; the additional Scenes of which gave ſome inconſiderate People ſuch vaſt Diſſatisfaction, becauſe they attempted to ridicule ſome Exhibitions of the ſame ſort at the New Houſe; in this there certainly was no Malevolence, and it muſt, if rightly conducted, have been of more Advantage to both Houſes, than the Suppreſſion of them could poſſibly be to either, ſince the Satire of the one Houſe muſt have excited the Curioſity of a Spectator to view at the other what was ſatirized; and, *vice verſa*, thoſe who had firſt ſeen the burleſqued would not have miſſed the Burleſque; the Spectators would always reap Advantage from Diſputes of this Sort, as they cauſe an Emulation in each Houſe, which muſt conſiderably contribute to the Increaſe of their Pleaſure;

beſides

beſides Managers have at all Times been allowed this Privilege of making Money, at each other's Expence, and for what Reaſon ſhould it now be lopp'd from them? I dare ſay thoſe who have attended the Theatres longer than I have known them, will tell you, they have ſeen Repreſentations of this ſort many Times exhibited, without thoſe who call themſelves the Town ſtooping to make a Party Affair of them. It has given me no little Pleaſure to have convinced ſome Members of that reſpectable Body, remarkable in the late theatrical Commotions, that they were wrong, and made them confeſs the Truth of my Aſſertion.

How muſt the Politeneſs of a Foreigner have been ſhock'd at theſe Buſtles, which make the Theatre appear like a Bear-Garden. Nothing is more common in *France* and *Italy*, than to ſee that Dramatic Piece ridiculed at one Houſe, which the Night before you have beheld elegantly exhibited at the other, and this without any Oppoſition or Diſturbance. *Corneille* and *(a) Racine*, the *Shakeſpear*, and *Rowe* of the *French* Stage, have often calmly met this Fate, there is no new Piece appears abroad which eſcapes it; and *Voltaire*

(1) RACINE in general has infinitely more Merit than ROWE; and if we have oppoſed the latter to the former, in this Place, it is on account of the Correctneſs of the Language.

him-

himſelf has been preſented with a *Parodie*, (for ſo are thoſe jocoſe Pieces called) on moſt of his Tragedies.

I ſhall quit Mr. *Woodward* with obſerving, that when the Stage loſes this excellent Comedian, it will be very difficult to ſupply his Place with any one who has even a Tithe of his Merit.

I confeſs myſelf almoſt unequal to the Taſk of giving Mrs. CLIVE her due Praiſe, and when I except ſome few Characters, which don't ſit eaſy on her Perſon and Appearance, ſuch as *Miſs Prue* and *Hoyden*, and *Ann Lovely*, I think it a Queſtion whether ſhe was ever equaled. I ſhall apply to her what Mr. FARQUHAR did to the celebrated Mr. WILKS in the Character of *Sir Harry Wildair*, in *The Conſtant Couple*, " Whenever we are unfortunate " enough to miſs her from the Stage, all the " Parts in her Caſt may go to the Jubilee."

Mr. *Moſſop* next claims our Obſervation; he is certainly one of the beſt Performers we have ſeen brought out for ſome Years; his Voice is a very good one, and his Speaking ſhews that he underſtands the Meaning of his Author perfectly well; his Perſon is very far from being a bad one; but he hurts it by his Action, which, I think, wants much modelling: I am glad to find that he don't make ſo much Uſe of his left

Hand

Hand, as he formerly did, and this leads me to hope, that he will, in Time, ſhake off the Aukwardneſs which hangs about him. In his *Richard the Third* there was very maſterly acting; his *Pierre* was extremely juſt and ſpirited; but he ſeems to neglect the four firſt Acts of *Zanga* in in the *Revenge*, that he may ſhine in the laſt, in which he certainly performs well. The Induſtry which has rais'd Mr. *Moſſop* to his preſent Station, and the Talents of which he is Maſter, induce us to hope that every Day will increaſe the great Satisfaction we enjoy from this young Performer.

Mr. Ross met very conſiderable Encouragement on his firſt Appearance laſt Seaſon, and he deſerv'd it, he is by Nature too confined to make an elevated Figure in Tragedy; but ſhe has made him ſome Amends in giving him an amiable Perſon, which, with proper Management, muſt always render him extremely agreeable in genteel Comedy; he has performed *Bevil* ſeveral Times in ſuch a Manner as muſt ſupport this Aſſertion: His Voice is not ſo ſtrong as I could wiſh it, but it has improved ſince laſt Seaſon. I have often found him unintelligible; which led me to imagine he had ſome Defect in his Speech; but a cloſe Attention to his performing has

ſhewn me my Error, and what appeared at firſt to be the Failing of Nature, I found was the Effect of Hurry and Inattention; wherefore I would counſel him to ſpeak ſlower than he generally does, to avoid thoſe Riſes and Falls, which I have remarked in *Miſs Bellamy*, and to ſtudy ſuch Characters as fall to his Lot with more Aſſiduity. I have marked this Gentleman in a regular Progreſſion, from the inferior Parts with which he began, to the Light in which he now ſtands, and his Improvement is very conſiderable. If he continue to exert the Induſtry which has raiſed him to his preſent Situation, a few Seaſons more will ſhew him in a Light far ſuperior to that in which he now appears.

Mr. *Dexter*'s firſt Performance of *Oroonooko*, we all remember, was amazing; and had he been able to have played the other Characters, in which he has ſince appeared, with an equal Spirit, he might have enjoyed a more remarkable Situation than he does at preſent: but we are to hope much more from him, ſince a Man of that good Senſe, which I am told he poſſeſſes, is always capable of improving. I heartily wiſh Nature had been more liberal to him of Voice; yet, tho' he has not the moſt extenſive Powers, he

is

is poſſeſſed of a Melody, which, when properly exerted, muſt always, eſpecially in Love Characters, pleaſe the Ear and affect the Heart.

The Figure of Mrs. *Davies* inſpires with infinite Pleaſure; and on her being firſt ſeen, we can't avoid being prejudiced in her Favour. She always reminds me of *Milton*'s Deſcription of *Eve*.

——Onward ſhe came,
And Grace was in her Step, *&c.*

She has perform'd *Lady Eaſy* better than I have ſeen it done for ſome Time paſt. She ſhew'd ſome Merit in a trifling Part of Don *Sebaſtian*; but in the Lady in *Comus* ſhe was Excellence itſelf. I cannot help ſpeaking thus, becauſe I went prejudiced againſt her; I had ſeen and been charmed with Mrs. *Pritchard*, before this, and I own I was ſurpriſed to find a Woman of Mrs. *Davies*'s Standing on the Stage, Miſtreſs of ſuch extreme Juſtice in her Enunciation; ſhe ſhews by this that ſhe underſtands her Author truly, and I think I can ſafely ſay that ſhe will advance every Day nearer Perfection.

Miſs *Haughton*, after having been for more Seaſons than one overlooked in *Covent Garden*, has been recovered from Obſcurity,

and brought forth in *Drury-Lane*, in the Character of *Amanda*, in Mr. *Cibber*'s Comedy of *Love's Laſt Shift*; and while ſhe ſtruck all who had ever heard her with Amazement, communicated vaſt Satisfaction. Her Speaking ſhews her to be a Woman of very good Underſtanding, were her Voice a little more extenſive, and could ſhe triumph over a ſlight Defect in her Speech, ſhe would move in a very elevated Sphere; however, her Appearance is very agreeable, and her Deficiencies are quite eclipſed by her Perfections.

We have not ſeen Mr. DAVIES often enough to form a Judgment of him as an Actor; but I think the few Characters in which he has appeared, ſhew him to be a good Critic on his Author. There is great Spirit in his Scene with Mr. *Garrick* in the third Act of the *Gameſter*, and in the Manner of expreſſing his Surprize at the Diſcovery of *Lewſon's* being alive, he is very happy; notwithſtanding that he underſtands well what he is to do, he ſeems always to have a Fear about him upon the Stage, which generally accompanies Merit, and is one of the worſt Enemies a Performer can have.

When we conſider Mr. SHUTER's Youth, and the Diſadvantages he labours under from the Want of a regular Education,

we cannot but admire his vaſt Talents. Who is there that ſees him in the old Man in *Lethe*, and Characters in that Caſt, that could imagine an Appearance ſo feeble and weak could be aſſumed by a ſtrong, hale, young Fellow, only twenty-two Years old? Perhaps Nature never beſtowed on any Body a greater Fund of Drollery; and I think he bids fair for being as great in low Comedy, as it is poſſible for Man to conceive.

Mr. *Garrick*, in the Character of *Bays*, was certainly right in bidding *Shuter* not be too comical; let him remember, that *the Clown muſt ſpeak no more than what is ſet down for him*, and obſerve beſides, that he who laughs at his own Jeſts, deſtroys their Force.

I have ſeen him, in his Summer Excurſions, diſplay Perfections of which a *London* Audience have no Notion of his being poſſeſſed. From ſome Attempts which I have beheld him make in Tragedy, I am ſatisfied that there are many affecting Characters to which he will be able to do great Juſtice, when he is a little more matured by Age and Experience. He muſt excuſe me, if I tell him in this Place, that his ſacrificing a Summer or two to Study, abſtracted from theatrical Pleaſures, will not only contribute to his Service, but to the Pleaſure

ſure of that Public to whom he gives infinite Satisfaction; a very ſhort Space of Time will make a Man of his Talents and Induſtry, a Proficient in Science. His Voice is ſtrong, clear and intelligible, which, join'd to his other good Qualities, muſt always make him the Object of public Eſteem.

Mr. HAVARD is a Man of good Senſe, he fills a Number of Characters with Juſtice and Decency; and his Gentleman-like Deportment in private Life has ſecured to him the Love of all his Acquaintance, as much as his Performance has general Approbation.

To *Sciolto*, *Acaſto*, and Characters in that Caſt, Mr. *Berry*'s Figure is well adapted; but he's too often fond of exerting a Tenderneſs, which grates upon the Ear of an Auditor. No Man has more Feeling than he, and it generally has its proper Effect.

Mr. YATES has a great deal of Merit in his Way; *Brainworm*, in *Every Man in his Humour*, the *Lying Valet*, *Snap*, *&c.* he fills with Humour and Propriety.

Mr. PALMER's firſt Appearance is very pleaſing; his Figure is a good one, but he has a Sameneſs in every thing he does, which makes him ſometimes tireſome: He did great Juſtice to TRUEWIT in the *Silent Woman*, of which he made much more

more than the Part ſeemed capable of; however he has not enough of the *Degagée* about him, to ſtand with much Reputation in *Mirable* and *Captain Plume*; there is a Sprightlineſs in theſe Characters of which he is not ſufficient Maſter; but the Improvements he has made, ſince his being firſt brought forward on the Stage, induce us to believe that Mr. PALMER has not yet reached the Summit of his Abilities.

Miſs MINORS, from the Satisfaction ſhe has always given me, and the Opinion of every judicious Critic whom I have heard mention her, I may venture to pronounce a very good Performer: ſhe conceives her Characters juſtly, and executes them happily: But I could wiſh the Managers would make more frequent Uſe of her than they do; no body can better affect the aukward Country Girl, and were ſhe thrown into that Caſt oftner than ſhe is, ſhe would add a real Appearance of Youth to that true Humour which ſhe poſſeſſes. Perhaps from a Conſciouſneſs of her being in ſome Meaſure neglected, ſhe has appeared of late to want Spirits; but I am convinced ſhe is under the Direction of Managers, who, when reminded of her Merit, will pay them due Attention.

Mr.

Mr. BLAKES is a very careful and a very uſeful Actor, he appears in the Character of a *Frenchman* to vaſt Advantage.

I confeſs myſelf no Judge of Muſical Performers, but it appears to me from the Singing of Mr. BEARD and Miſs NORRIS, that Sound and Senſe are not incompatible, for while they charm the Ear with Melody, they convey the Meaning of the Poet ſo as to gratify the Underſtanding. Tho' Meaning is not the general Attribute of Modern Song Writing. However as an Exception to this general Rule, it muſt be allowed, that a Gentleman who has favoured the Town with two or three Paſtoral Pieces, has made that Sort of Poeſy reſpectable, by blending Judgment with Fancy and unaffected Simplicity.

I ſhould be very ſorry to find that Report true, which ſays Miſs NORRIS has quitted the Stage, ſince by her Abſence all Lovers of Muſic will be deprived of a ſenſible, a judicious and elegant Performer, whoſe Place the Managers will find it as difficult to fill with equal Merit as that of a CIBBER, a PRITCHARD, or a CLIVE.

Mr. CROSS the Prompter ſhould not be paſſed unnoticed, ſince he very often behind the Curtain ſupports the Performer in conveying to us the Pleaſure we enjoy, by ſupplying in proper Time the Defects

of

of treacherous Memory: No Man underſtands better the Buſineſs of the Stage, and from a long Acquaintance with all the Pieces that have been play'd for ſome Years paſt, he is perfect in a Number of Characters, and can, at an Hour's Warning, fill up a Chaſm cauſed by the ſudden Sickneſs, or any other unexpected Accident befalling a Performer.

From *Drury-Lane*, where we have delayed longer than we at firſt intended, let us haſten to *Covent-Garden*, and for Expedition-ſake, we'll ſuppoſe ourſelves already in the Green-Room, where the Performers generally aſſemble. Here we meet Mr. BARRY, a Gentleman to whom Nature has been laviſh of her Gifts; whom ſhe has furniſh'd with Voice and Perſon to an eminent Degree of Excellence; his Utterance is harmonious; he has great Spirit, great Tenderneſs, and great Rapture; he is in all his Attitudes extremely picturesque, and in his Delivery pleaſing: There are incomparable Beauties in his OTHELLO, his BAJAZET, his CASTALIO, his PHOCIAS, his VARANES, and many other Characters, which ſufficiently ſhew his vaſt Abilities; and were he to ſtrike out into a more extenſive Walk, and not confine himſelf to an eternal Round of the ſame Characters, he would ſoon find it of great Advantage both

to himſelf and the Houſe which he adorns, while the Town would be ſtill more charm'd with his Induſtry and Perfections. There are a Number of Plays upon an equal Footing with thoſe which now engroſs the public Attention, in which Mr. *Barry* would cut a ſhining Figure, which I am convinced would give infinite Pleaſure in being revived, while they might ſet this great Performer above the Fear of a Rival, particularly ſuch Pieces as have the Paſſion of Love ſtrongly marked, in the principal Character, for there I can with Juſtice ſay, he will always remain HIMSELF ALONE,

—— And far behind his Worth,
Come all the Praiſes which I now beſtow.

SHAKES.

" Nature (1) (ſays a certain Writer, ſpeaking of Mr. BARRY) has done every Thing " for this Performer, almoſt in an Extravagance of Liberality; and he has added every Thing that Application could " contribute to the improving her Favours, " Applauſe generally has a contrary Effect, but in him it has only ſerv'd to " quicken that Spirit of Emulation, which " firſt called up his Powers; and he " ſeems to underſtand it, as an Honour " which he is to deſerve rather than which " he does. Such Modeſty is ſeldom join-

(1) The INSPECTOR.

ed

" ed to ſuch Excellence; ſuch Applica-
" tion to ſuch Talents; his *Othello* is and
" will remain unrivaled: His Deport-
" ment in *Romeo*, it were hard to ſay
" whether it be more graceful or more
" expreſſive, and his broken Voice in the laſt
" Scene, the ſcarce articulate Utterance of
" Deſpair chill every Heart that hears him.
" What are we to expect from this Per-
" former; who, while we place him at
" the Top of his Profeſſion, thinks him-
" ſelf but labouring up the hard Aſcent,
" and fancies Excellence at an Height,
" where, if he reach it we ſhall then firſt
" know it could exiſt?"

This is certainly ſaying a great deal, but not more than this great Performer truly deſerves.

'Tis not in Language to ſpeak the Excellencies of Mrs. *Cibber*; there is ſomething ſo affecting in her Look, ſo harmonious and plaintive in her Voice, that her Diſtreſs never fails to affect in the higheſt Degree. What unſpeakable Tenderneſs and Rapture is there in her *Belvidera* and her *Juliet?* what Power, what Variety of Paſſion in her *Alicia?*

Theſe Lines are Part of a Character of Mrs. CIBBER, drawn by the ingenious *Author* of the *New Play* of the EARL of ESSEX.

She too, whom Nature form'd ſupreme to ſtand,
And rule the Paſſions with a mighty Hand;

Behold in *Conſtance* what fierce Earthquakes roul,
What Storms, what Whirlwinds rend her ſhatter'd Soul!
Diſtreſs'd, undone; now Madneſs, now Deſpair,
Flame in her Face, and from her Eye-balls glare.
Amazement, Sorrow, Silence beſt can ſhow,
What our Hearts feel for *Juliet*'s deſp'rate Woe,
Oh! ſee ſhe drinks, the Draught foreſtalls her Doom,
Diſtracted paints the Terrors of the Tomb;
She wakes, ſhe wakes; here all Deſcription fails,
Words can't expreſs what Pang the Soul aſſails.

The Actor who covets the Applauſe of the Judicious, and he who knows its Value, certainly will, ſhould cull from Nature, by Obſervation, Marks of the Character he is to aſſume; he ſhould be endow'd with a ſtrong Judgment, to enable him to ſelect the uſeful and lay aſide the ſuperfluous Strokes which he may meet; the Diſtinction is nice, and claims more than a common Capacity. Much Penetration and great Abilities are requiſite to trace Nature thro' her ſeveral Mazes. For an Explanation of our Meaning let us conſider ſeveral Particulars.

A Character copied directly from one Perſon, ſeldom affords Variety enough to entertain, or ſufficient Force of Satire to inſtruct on the Stage; the Foibles of many properly compiled are neceſſary to this uſeful End. From the conformable Oddities of ſeveral Individuals, judiciouſly blended together,

ther, has Mr. GARRICK, in his Farce of *Miſs in her Teens*, obliged us with thoſe admirable Objects of Humour, FLASH and FRIBBLE; yet I fancy Nature ſcarcely ever furniſh'd an exact Portrait of either of theſe Characters in a ſingle Perſon. I have often been in Company with Men, who have manifeſted a good Underſtanding in Diſcourſe, and Bravery and Generoſity in Action; who have appeared to me, at firſt Sight, ſo weak and womaniſh that I have thought them incapable of either. On the other Hand, I have known Men of an Athletic Size, and a moſt robuſt Appearance, who have been Maſters of every Abſurdity that conſtitutes a *Fribble:* At this very Time I know by Sight, thank Heaven it is only by Sight! a Perſon who is a very *Falſtaff* in Size, *yet ſpeaks and moves for all the World like a Lady.*—This ſame delicate Object came not long ſince into a Coffee Houſe, with his Hand muffled in black Silk, and told a deplorable Story of a Hurt received, in Voice almoſt as fine, and Manner quite as melancholly as does the *Fribble* of *Garrick*; the Weapon of Offence indeed was not the ſame deſperate one, a *Whip*, but a Fan, with which a cruel Lady had unfortunately ſtruck him over the Thumb: Nor was I the only one who

who heard and wonder'd at his Misfortune. I have ſaid before that the Actor ſhould like the Author, ſearch thro' Nature for the Conſtituents of the Character which he is to fill.

This Rule Mr. *Macklin* generally obſerves, his Diſtinctions are critically right; and he draws from Nature the Heightning and Completion of his Characters. Nor is it the outward Geſtures only which he ſtudies, the Workings of the Mind are alſo his Conſideration; hence his Strokes are moſtly delicately juſt; but his Performances, too refined for common Conception, often become *Caviar* to the General: However, he has to conſole him this judicious Sentiment of SHAKESPEAR: *The Applauſe of one judicious Perſon outweighs a whole Theatre of others*; a Maxim juſtified by every Conſideration, except that of Profit; for we have frequent Proofs, that the Judicious are not always a Ballance againſt the Friends of Noiſe and Dulneſs: This obliges me to ſay of Mr. *Macklin*, that he is wrong, in regulating himſelf, as much as he poſſibly can to this Rule, that is, *in being too often right.*

Mr. *Macklin* is very great in the *Miſer*, the *Jew of Venice*, Sir *Gilbert Wrangle*, and a great Number of Parts beſides, ſome of

of which I muſt regret ſeeing given to Players in the very ſame Houſe, who are Maſters of neither Judgment nor Humour. I am ſure if they are, they do not chuſe to manifeſt it; yet wherefore they meet this whimſical Preference, is pretty hard to divine.

Mrs. *Macklin*, who is equally great in her Walk, often falls a Prey to the Enemies of Perfection. I have heard, to give an Inſtance, ſome modern Critics accuſe her of overacting the Nurſe in *Romeo* and *Juliet*; and in my Opinion they may as well ſay, that SHAKESPEAR has overwritten it. Who is there that has ſeen a goſſiping old Woman in a Family where ſhe takes Liberties for having nurſed a favourite Child, and can deny, that all the Self-ſufficiency and Impertinence ſo finely deſcribed by her in this Place, is indiſputably juſt? I never ſaw her in this Part in *Lady Wrangle*, *Lady Wronghead*, *Lady Wiſhfort*, &c. but I have enjoyed infinite Pleaſure, ſuch true Pleaſure as Comedy is deſigned to give. I have taſted Pleaſure of another Sort, from ſeeing others in her Caſt; that Pleaſure which the Prince of Dramatic Writers calls *the Balm of Hurt Minds, great Nature's ſecond Courſe*; and I think if the intellectual Feaſt of the theatrical Entertainment proves inſipid, it is very happy

happy to have the Enjoyment of ſo luxurious a *ſecond Courſe*.

I wiſh Miſs MACKLIN's longer Continuance on the Stage had given us a better Opportunity of animadverting on her Merits; I am perſwaded they would have proved a copious Subject: Her Figure is a very good one; her Eye ſtrong, piercing, and ſignificant; her Voice clear, melodious, and intelligible; her Deportment eaſy, and her Action happily juſt. She has every Qualification requiſite in a great Actreſs, but Practice. In Theory I dare ſay ſhe is very near capital; and as I wiſh well to the Stage, I am impatient to ſee her properly brought forward; for I am convinced ſhe, who on her firſt Appearance roſe ſo near to Perfection, muſt prove, in ſome Time, one of the Theatre's greateſt Boaſts, and her own Merits will ſecure her Encouragement.

Mr. *Ryan* was for many Years an Ornament to the Stage; there are ſome Places in his *Richard the Third*, in which he ſurpriſed me: His *Oreſtes* I have heard much of, and ſhould be glad to ſee him play it. There are ſome Things in which he appears, to which I cannot reconcile his Perſon aud Manner; and tho' he has great Merit in many Parts, he recals to my Mind the following Line of *Virgil*.

Genua

Genua labant, Gelidus concrevit frigore ſanguis.

Having ſeen Mr. *Smith* only in the Character of *Theodoſius*, we cannot pretend to determine his Merit; his Figure is a good one, and his Aſpect is pleaſing; he was pretty juſt in his Enunciation; and I do not think his Voice a bad one; but they certainly did not conſider his Intereſt truly, who fixed him, for a firſt Performance, to this Character, in which it is impoſſible for the beſt Actor to make any Figure, *Varanes* having through the whole Play ſo much the Superiority of *Theodoſius*, and the Paſſions of each Character being nearly the ſame.

Mrs. *Bland* has made a very conſiderable Improvement, ſince her firſt coming on the Stage; her Performances this Seaſon ſhew ſhe has made the beſt Uſe of her Time in *Ireland*; ſhe is a very agreeable Figure, and adds infinite Spirit to many comic Characters; nor is ſhe without her Merit in Tragedy, tho' that is not her Fort; no Woman is Miſtreſs of greater Application, and with ſuch Talents and Induſtry as ſhe poſſeſſes, muſt every Day improve thoſe Excellencies we ſee in her.

Mrs. *Elmy*'s Merit is in many Parts very conſpicuous: To the Lady in *Comus*, Lady *Grace* in the *Provoked Huſband*, &c. ſhe does great Juſtice: In ſhort, where good Senſe, Eaſe and Gentility, are the diſtinguiſhing Characteriſtics few appear to more Advantage.

The next Perſon I ſhall mention is Mr. *Sparks*, who has in ſeveral Things very extenſive Merit, which I wiſh he had more frequent Opportunities of ſhewing, than the Plays, as they are now caſt, allow him. From Mr. SPARKS's Performance of *Manly* in the *Provoked Huſband*, we are convinced, that there are ſome Characters in Comedy, which are now indifferently diſpoſed of, in which his Appearance would give true Satisfaction; and I dare ſay many Admirers of theatrical Entertainment lament with me the not ſeeing him in the *Old Batchelor*, the *Plain-dealer*, &c. a Walk which we hoped he would have filled, when the Retirement of Mr. *Quin* left it unoccupied: His playing *Young Wou'd-be* in the *Twin-Rivals*, ſhews us that his Merits are not entirely confined to the Serious in Comedy; but that he is as capable of giving us Pleaſure in Parts, the Support of which depends as well on a proper Exertion of Humour as Judgment.

His

His *Acaſto* always makes a very ſtrong Impreſſion on me, and I never hear him, without ſhedding Tears, ſpeak this Line to *Monimia*,

When you complain to me, I'll prove a Father.

The Nobleneſs and Generoſity, which are the Characteriſtics of this good old Man, are ſo ſtrongly expreſſed in Mr. *Sparks*'s Manner and Delivery, that we plainly perceive his Exit at that Inſtant is neceſſary, ſince a Moment's longer Delay would have given Pity for the unhappy Girl the Sway over that Reſentment, of which his Honour demands the Support: And his ſaying,

You are my Daughter ſtill,

in his performing *Sciolto*, glows ſo ſtrongly with the Diſtreſs of the fond Father, that we are touched to the Soul with the Situation: And tho' Mr. *Sparks* may have Peculiarities which are not always pleaſing, it is certain he is capable of great Feeling in his proper Caſt in Tragedy, as well as affording true Pleaſure in Comedy.

To him ſucceeds Mr. *Dyer*, who I think very agreeable both in Tragedy and

Comedy, and who deſerves an exalted Place in the Liſt of theatrical Proficients. There is a Lightneſs in his Deportment, which does not ſuit well with Characters of Gravity; yet I have ſeen him perform ſome Things in Tragedy extremely well. And I do not know to what to attribute Mrs. DYER's being ſo ſeldom ſeen, ſince ſhe is a very pleaſing Performer, and does to many Parts infinite Juſtice.

I can ſay no more of Mr. BARRINGTON, than that there is great Comedy in his TEAGUE, the only Character in which he now appears; the Time has been when he has given me great Pleaſure in many others; but we are to ſuppoſe he is kept up to be produced on an Emergency.

If Mr. RIDOUT is not a ſhining Actor, he is at leaſt a very uſeful one; and we are ſatisfied to find him decent, becauſe we do not expect more from him.

I am not without Hopes of ſeeing Mr. *Branſby* improve, ſince he ſeems always to be careful of what he is about.

Mrs. *Vincent* generally means well, and ſpeaks with great Propriety; but I could wiſh ſhe aimed leſs at Eaſe, for which I am afraid ſhe often miſtakes Affectation.

Mr. *Lowe* has, I have been informed by ſome great Judges of Muſic, made a very conſiderable Progreſs within theſe two Years;

Years; to me he is always a very pleaſing Performer, and he has the moſt Melody in his Voice of any of our preſent theatrical Singers. Mrs. *Chambers* is not without great Merit in *Polly Peachum*, for ſhe ſpeaks as well as ſings it properly: Her Voice is weak, but very ſweet; and ſhe would render her Figure much more pleaſing, and it is very agreeable, could ſhe ſhake off a Particularity in her Gait, which is very hurtful to her Perſon.

There are many other Performers in either Houſe, of whom we have not Room to ſpeak here: Mr. *Bridgewater*, Mr. *Mozeen*, Mr. *Dunſtal*, Mr. *Burton*, Mr. *Winſtone*, Mr. *Uſher*; and Mr. *Arthur*, who in *Pantomimery* has infinite Humour.

It would be Injuſtice to the Merit of one of the beſt Performers the Age is adorned with, ſhould we cloſe without noticing Mrs. *Woffington*, whom we muſt follow to *Ireland*; where we find her Praiſes eccho'd in every News-paper, and handled in a more copious Manner, than my Plan will allow of. I cannot help expreſſing ſome Concern, at being forced to acknowledge, that ſhe more truly repreſents the gay, ſprightly, genteel young Fellow, than any Performer I ever ſaw. This muſt be a Reflexion upon the male Sex, that ſhe will remain incomparable, till we can

pro-

produce a Man as great in *Lady Townly*, as ſhe is in *Sir Harry Wildair*.

The reverſing Sexes, call to my Remembrance a Group of City Executioners, aſſembled to ſlaughter that dear Offspring of *Ambroſe Philips*, called the *Diſtreſſed Mother*; a Detail of whoſe Dreſſes, Figures, Merits and Abilities, muſt, tho' ſupported by ocular Atteſtation, appear a Romance. We ſhall confine ourſelves only to one Incident relative to *Andromache*, who was, according to all Accounts, of an extraordinary Size; her Repreſentative was a Blackſmith, about ſix Feet high, rather ſlim than corpulent; his Complexion ſuited to his Profeſſion; his Face was very long, and very meagre; his Eye-brows large and black, and his audible Voice rather Baſe than Treble, tho' by ſudden Tranſitions from the one to the other, he gave it a vaſt Variety.

This wonderful Perſonage ſucceeded well for the three firſt Acts; but

O Fortuna potens! quam variabilis!

Malice, in the Shape of Hiſſes, attacked this incomparable Heroine, which he, excuſe the Confuſion of Genders, and take them as they come,—bore with heroic Grace, till in a moſt pathetic Speech, an half-

ſuck'd

ſuck'd Orange hit her over the Eye with ſuch Force, that the ſpread Pulp over-ſmeared and cloſed the Luminary: The Son of *Vulcan* ſtarted, mad with Rage, dropped all his Pomp and Energy of Rant; and with that Handkerchief which late wiped Tears from Royalty Diſtreſſed, freed himſelf from the Incumbrance of the hoſtile Orange; then, with collected Fury in his Looks, and Anger darting from his open Eye, he tore the Tragic Trappings from his Head, and a bare Skull preſented to the View, which bore the indented Mark of many a Wound; then, with tremendous Frown, terrific Voice, and Attitude ſtrong fixed, by *Broughton* taught, in Words like theſe he to the Gallery ſpoke.

'Whatever Scoundrel threw the Orange 'at me, I tell him he's a Raſcal to his 'Face; and if he dares do me Juſtice, let 'him come down, and I'll box him for the 'Amuſement of the good Company; for 'd——n my B——d, if any Raſcal ſhall 'uſe me ill, nor put me on the Footing of 'a common Stage-Player, I would have 'you know, you Dog, I am no ſuch Per-'ſon; I play for my Diverſion, and can 'afford to give any ſuch low-liv'd Fellow 'as you, a Bowl of Punch at any time; 'for tho' I am a Blackſmith, Sirrah, I never

'what

'want Money; look here, you Scoun-
'drel.'

At theſe Words he whipt his Hand under his Petticoats, to feel for his Money; when lo! ſuch a tadderdemalion Pair of Breeches appeared, as excited the whole Aſſembly to laugh. This unpolite Treatment, the injured *Andromache*, not knowing the true Cauſe of, took as the Effect of Malice and Party, Foes to her vaſt Merit, and ſtalk'd of damning Man, Woman and Child for their Impertinence; but muttering, that he deſerved this Uſage for *demeaning himſelf ſo much as to go on the Stage.*

If this Story proves agreeable, I can aſſure you that it is Truth; and as it is not improperly applied, I hope it may pleaſe.

Now, that you have been ſo very good, gentle Reader, take notice I do not diſtinguiſh your Sex, becauſe at the Time of your reading this, I am not clear as to that Point; but, as I ſaid before, gentle Reader, ſince you have done me the Honour to croſs the Channel with me, allow me to introduce to you Mr. *Sherridan*, the Manager of the *Dublin Theatre Royal*; in which you will find, through his Care and Judgment, Oeconomy, Elegance, and Decency unexpected.

Mr. *Sherridan* has, by adhering to his Reſolution, kept every Body, of what Rank

or

or Denomination ſoever, from coming behind the Scenes, a Liberty, allowed, upon no account, to thoſe who do not belong to the Stage: By theſe Means the Entrances and Exits are free for the Performers, and never jammed up with an immoveable Country Squire, or the Fop formed out Lace and Pulvilio. Indeed the ripening of this Reformation coſt him a World of Pains, and in *England*, for many Reaſons, cannot be compaſſed.

Mr. *Sherridan* ſet out firſt with an indifferent Figure, and a Voice ſtill worſe; the latter he has ſtrengthened, the former he has corrected. No Man underſtands the Buſineſs of the Stage better; he is an excellent Scholar, an exceeding good Commentator on his Author, and very judicious in his Delivery. There is an intolerable ſtiffneſs in his Comedy; but conſcious of his Defect, he ſeldom appears in it, except obliged to it.

Perhaps a truer Orator never trod the Stage; his *Hamlet* is excellent acting; and he does infinite Juſtice to *Pierre* and to *Horatio*; and there is a Horror in his coming from murdering *Duncan* in *Macbeth*, which thrills through the Soul of every Spectator, and was never exceeded: His ſpeaking this Line in *Cato*, where the dead Body of his Son *Marcus* is brought in.

Thanks to the Gods, my Boy has done his Duty!

ſhews ſo ſtrongly the internal Contention between the Father and the Philoſopher for Superiority, that while we admire the *Stoic*, we pity the Parent, whom we could almoſt condemn for his Reſignation; and in his *Brutus*'s Orations, in Defence of *Cæſar*'s Murder, we *who are mute Spectators of the Scene*, are by his graceful and enforceing Manner enthuſiaſtically warmed, and become almoſt acceſſary to the Deed.

We ſhall quit Mr. *Sherridan* with obſerving, that no Man was ever more truly obedient to that Rule of *Shakeſpear*, *Suit your Action to your Words, your Words to your Action.*

Under this Gentleman's Direction we find Mr. *Digges*, whoſe Mien is noble, his Perſon very engaging; he is not quite ſo tall as Mr. *Barry*, but extremely genteel; his Eye is briſk and ſpirited; all his Features happily diſpoſed for the Stage, and capable of marking ſtrongly the Variety of Paſſions natural to the human Frame. This he manifeſts in *Lear* and *Jaffier*; ſome Parts of which he plays extremely well, and has indeed through the whole great Merit; he ſtrikes out many Excellen-

cie

cies when he plays from himſelf, but fails too often, by endeavouring to imitate Mr. *Garrick*, in Things, to execute which requires the Judgment, as well as the Powers, of a *Garrick*.

Mrs. *Ward* has, we are told, been received here with great Applauſe in *Monimia*, *Juliet*, &c. It is certain an *Iriſh* Audience has a great deal of good Nature, to which their Judgment often gives way, and perhaps the Warmth of their Applauſe may conquer that Inſipidity which Mrs. *Ward* ſeems to have about her, diſpel her Coldneſs, infuſe an additional Flow of Spirits, and a requiſite Fire.

Mr. *King*, who is at preſent on this Stage, has great Spirit in many Parts; and it is generally ſaid he does not enter badly into *Ranger*, *Archer*, and many others; he has been greatly praiſed for playing *Trappanti*, and he is not amiſs in *Lothario*, tho' the Bent of his Genius is much more for Comedy than Tragedy.

There is a Performer who certainly claims a Place in Merit among the firſt Actors of his Age; and if we have not named him yet, it is becauſe we did not know where to fix him; as Misfortunes have prevented his renewing to us a Pleaſure which we have often reaped from his Talents. This is Mr. *Theophilus Cibber*, for

for whoſe great Abilities we have the higheſt Eſteem; his Fops are ſtrong Pictures of Nature, and he diſtinguiſhes very properly between their different Species: His *Fondlewife* is true Comedy; and thoſe who ſaw him play *Dr. Wolf* in the *Nonjuror*, not long ſince in *Drury-Lane*, muſt confeſs it incomparable. I dare ſay all true Lovers of theatrical Merit will lament the evil Fortune which confines to a Priſon a Man whom it was once the Faſhion to follow and encourage, and whoſe particular Caſt of Parts are not ſeen filled up with that Fire and Propriety which he is able to embelliſh them with.

Now the Heat of my *Scribendi Cacoethes* has deſtroyed its Fuel, and the Subject of the *Theatre* is quite exhauſted, I muſt, like *Cincinnatus* returned from Battle, dedicate my Weapon in the Temple of Peace, and quit the Warfare of Criticiſm: Nor ſhall the Invective of Ignorance, or the Cavil of Impertinence, force me from my Aſylum to Contention. I love the Stage becauſe it is a rational Entertainment, which mixes Pleaſure with Inſtruction. I have heard it abuſed by Foes to common Senſe, the Proſelytes of Enthuſiaſm: This leads me to a Defence of its Honour and Antiquity: Thence I was induced to review its preſent State; I found the Field a large

large one, the Proſpect pleaſant, and the Soil ſtrewed with Curioſities, I could not avoid handling them, for I am by Nature a Sort of Virtuoſo, the Conſequence of examining them was the Conſideration of their Natures; and I have been as juſt as poſſible in their Anatomy. If it pleaſe the five hundred juſt Critics, whom a humorous, but intelligent Writer upon the Stage †, allows out of twelve thouſand Play-followers in this Metropolis, I ſhall reſt contented.

† *Samuel Foote*, Eſq; in his *Treatiſe of the Paſſions*, from whoſe *Engliſhman at Paris*, intended for Mr. *Macklin*'s Benefit, we may hope once again to ſee the true Spirit of Comedy revived.

F I N I S.